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MANIPUR SITUATION PEACEFUL, ₹100 CR RELIEF PACKAGE FOR DISPLACED PEOPLE

The ₹101.75 cr package was cleared on Union Home Minister Amit Shah's direction, said the security advisor to state govt Kuldiep Singh

NO VIOLENCE REPORTED IN PAST 48 HOURS

There has been no violence in the state in the past 48 hours, said the security advisor, adding that movement of essential items has become normal. In the last 24 hours, 27 arms, 245 ammunition and 41 bombs were recovered from the Porompat police station jurisdiction of Imphal East district, while one weapon and two bombs were seized in the state's Bishnupur district

RESTORE INTERNET, SAYS HUMAN RIGHTS BODY

- A total of 896 arms, 11,763 ammunition and 200 bombs of different kinds have been recovered so far, the security advisor added on Thursday
- Meanwhile, the Manipur Human Rights Commission has asked the state government to restore internet services, which have remained suspended since May 3, stating that internet plays a vital role in modern day life

35,000

ESTIMATED NO. OF PEOPLE DISPLACED IN MANIPUR VIOLENCE; OVER 90 WERE KILLED

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India, Russia spar over rail joint venture control

Note verbale issued as Rail Vikas Nigam wants stake raised to 69%

SHAHID FARIDI @ New Delhi

INDIA and Russia are locked in a tussle for the control of a joint venture company that has won an approximately ₹30,000-crore contract to build 120 new Vande Bharat trains and maintain them for the next 35 years.

Metrowagonmash, which is part of Transmashholding, Russia's largest transport engineering company specialising in developing, designing and manufacturing of rolling stock for railways, had in partnership with Indian public sector undertaking Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) successfully bid for manufacturing 120 Vande Bharat trains and their maintenance for the next 35 years.

Metrowagonmash owns 80% and RVNL 20% in the company that won the contract. The RVNL now wants a larger share of 69%, leaving 26% for Metrowagonmash and 5% for a third partner, Locomotive Electronic Systems (LES).

In a letter dated April 25, 2023 to Metrowagonmash, the RVNL said it "has incorporated a fully owned private company by the name of Kinet Railway Solutions Ltd (KRSL). This company will act as the SPV (special purpose vehicle) that will sign the Manufacturing-cum-Maintenance Agreement (MCMA) with the Ministry of Railways and subsequently implement the project."

Vande Bharat deal

At present, RVNL has 20% stake in the JV. It wants it hiked to 69% citing the present geo-political situation. The JV bagged a ₹30,000-crore contract to manufacture and maintain Vande Bharat trains

The RVNL said in the letter that being a government company it is better placed to handle issues like getting clearances and engaging local manpower. It further said that "given the present geo-political situation and the fact that the RVNL is a trustworthy public sector unit having robust standing with public financial institutions, it will be easier for the SPV to mobilise funding from the domestic market at the most competitive rates." The PSU said "it will be a win-win situation for all partners if RVNL plays the primary role in this initiative..."

RVNL asked Metrowagonmash to provide its consent for its proposed shareholding of 69% for RVNL, 26% for Metrowagonmash and 5% for LES.

But Metrowagonmash protested and took up the matter with the Russian government. The trade representative of the Russian Federation then sent a Note Verbale to the government of India on May 8 asking it to direct RVNL to stick to the original contract.

The tussle between the two companies is continuing and the matter is now likely to be settled at the top level of the two governments.

Shakti from June 11, Gruha Jyothi Aug 1

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE state government is all set to launch three of its five guarantees. As per its decision, Shakti will be launched in Bengaluru on June 11, Gruha Jyothi in Kalaburagi on August 1 and Gruha Lakshmi in Belagavi on August 17 or 18.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who held a meeting with officials of the departments associated with the guarantees on Thursday, instructed them that the process of receiving applications for all guarantees should be made simple.

Siddaramaiah told the officials to take steps to ensure that the beneficiaries faced no harassment while submitting applications.

He said reasons should be cited for rejection of applications submitted by the beneficiaries. If applications are rejected for silly reasons, action will be taken against the employees. Siddaramaiah directed the officials of the e-governance department to ensure that the Seva Sindhu portal is free of snags and errors as applications will be submitted through it.

CM Siddaramaiah at a meeting on Gruha Jyothi scheme in Bengaluru on Thursday

Referring to Gruha Jyothi, he told the officials to clear the confusion over its guidelines and raise awareness among the people about the scheme.

He said registration for this scheme can be done through the Seva Sindhu Portal. P4

KEY NUMBERS

INFLATION

- RBI moderates its projection for retail inflation in **2023-24** to **5.1%** from **5.2%** forecast in April

GDP

- FY24 economic growth projection retained at **6.5%**, on the back of supportive domestic demand conditions
- GDP growth in the first quarter of FY24 is pegged at **8%**, Q2 **6.5%**, Q3 **6%**, and Q4 at **5.7%**
- GDP had grown 6.1% in Q4 of FY23, pushing up annual growth rate to **7.2%** against **7%** anticipated earlier

With Arjuna's eye on inflation, RBI retains repo rate at 6.5%

SACHIN KUMAR @ Mumbai

THE RBI on Thursday left repo rate (at which the central bank lends money to commercial banks) unchanged at 6.5%, making it the second pause in a row. The RBI had pressed the pause button in April after six consecutive rate hikes aggregating 250 bps since May 2022.

Announcing the monetary policy committee's decision, which was in line with market expectations, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the central bank is committed to bringing down inflation to the target level of 4%. "Given the uncertainties, we need to maintain Arjuna's eye on the evolving inflation scenario. Let me re-emphasise that headline inflation still remains above the target and being within the tolerance band is not enough," he said.

Prices have started falling in the past few months with retail inflation dropping to an 18-month low of 4.7% in April and 5.66% in March. In the current financial year, however, RBI expects inflation to remain above 4%, at 5.1%. Das said the economy is resilient despite pressure from global cues. P13

EXPRESS READ

Come Sept 1, all int'l ops at KIA from T2

BENGALURU: International operations of all airlines at Bengaluru airport will be moved to Terminal 2 from September 1, according to a Bangalore International Airport Limited source. Presently, 28 airlines operate from Kempegowda International Airport. Twenty-five international destinations are connected from here.

"International operations, including customs and immigration, have to be completely shifted at one go," the source said. IndiGo, Akasa Air and Spicejet will continue their domestic operations from T1. Air India will shift its domestic operations to T2 shortly.

India lights into Canada for letting Khalistanis glorify Indira's murder

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

INDIA on Thursday sharply rebuked Canada for letting Khalistani separatists use its space, saying it is not good for them or for bilateral relations.

Responding to questions on a tableau Khalistani activists took out on Wednesday in Brampton glorifying the assassination of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, "It is not just one incident as the larger underlying issue is that they give space to those who advocate violence. Besides vote bank politics why would anybody do this?"

"It's is neither good for Canada nor its relationship with India," Jaishankar said.

He also was appalled at Canada's National Security Advisor complaining that India interferes in Canada's domestic affairs. "This comment reminds me of the phrase in Hindi, *Ulta Chor Kotwal ko Dantey* (accused reprimanding the victim)," he quipped.

Regarding the fate of about 700 Indian students who face possible deportation for allegedly having fake documents, the minister said the students should not be sent back if they aren't at fault.

"For some time now there is this case of Indian students who the Canadian authorities have alleged did not study in the colleges that they had claimed to have graduated from. Our foreign ministry and High Commission and Consulates in Canada have taken up their case. The people who mislead them are culpable and should be acted against. The students studied in good faith and it's unfair to punish them," Jaishankar told this paper.

For his part, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau assured the Indian students that his government will evaluate each case of the protesting students.

"We are deeply aware of the cases of international students facing removal orders over fraudulent college acceptance letters. To be clear, our focus is on indentifying the culprits, not penalising the victims," said Trudeau. P9

Gaganyaan crew module test to take place in August

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

ISRO Chairman S Somanath on Thursday said the first test for the Gaganyaan crew module mission will take place in August.

Addressing reporters in Bengaluru, the ISRO chairman stated that while the test missium was to be undertaken in July, this would not be the case. "The first test mission was initially meant to take place in July, but will possibly take place in August. Gaganyaan was scheduled for launch in 2022. But due to the pandemic, we faced a huge delay of nearly a year-and-half. Our thinking is that we don't want to rush the mission. The primary objective of the human spaceflight mission is that it is sure shot and safe. We have also enhanced the testing and demonstration missions substantially, so that it includes additional abort directives. If there is any problem, our priority is that the crew is saved," he said.

Somanath said final preparations are under way for the upcoming launch of Chandrayaan 3. It is the third lunar exploration mission undertaken by ISRO, following Chandrayaan 2 in 2019. While Chandrayaan 2 launch was successful, the deployment of its lander and rover was considered a failure due to the lander crashing. Chandrayaan 3 will focus on strengthening the lander this time around, the ISRO chairman stated, while the orbiter for the third mission will not include any payload.

CONTINUED ON: P5

WITH THIS ISSUE

BENGALURU'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE **INDULGE** 40 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Monsoon hits Kerala, to enter K'taka in 2 days

JITENDRA CHOUBEY & BOSKY KHANNA @ New Delhi/Bengaluru

THE southwest monsoon hit the Kerala coast on Thursday, a week after the usual onset date of June 1. It is likely to enter south interior Karnataka by June 10 or 11.

A slight delay was expected as India Meteorological Department (IMD) had forecast that the monsoon will hit Kerala on June 4. However, the formation of a very severe cyclonic storm, Biparjoy, in the Arabian Sea delayed the onset of monsoon.

"The southwest monsoon has advanced into remaining parts of south Arabian Sea and some parts of central Arabian Sea, entire Lakshadweep area, most parts of Kerala, most parts of south Tamil Nadu, remaining parts of Comorin area, Gulf of Mannar and some more parts of southwest, central and northeast Bay of Bengal on Thursday," according to a statement from India Meteorological Department.

While the IMD forecast a normal monsoon, it cautioned above normal showers for June in south interior Karnataka, including Bengaluru, Chikkaballapura, Tumakuru, Chamarajanagar, Kolar and its surrounding areas.

Rainfall forecast for Karnataka from June to September is 83 cm. Bengaluru is likely to receive 11 cm of rainfall in June. For the entire season, Bengaluru is likely to receive 60 cm of rainfall.

There will be normal rainfall over most parts of Karnataka during this monsoon season, according to officials.

The southwest monsoon is critical for agriculture, as over 52% of the country is rain-dependent. In view of the very severe cyclonic storm, fishermen have been warned not to venture into the sea till June 14.

The weather agency also warned of heat wave conditions over Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the next 2-4 days. P5

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